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SUBJECT Management of a Sovkhoz

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the Agrotekhnikum (agricultural technical school) at Kharkov accelerated course at the Agricultural Institute in Leningrad from 1931 to 1934. The speed-up program in the early nineteen-thirties resulted from the fact that the Soviet Government was in dire need of agricultural cadres in order to save the agricultural economy during the years of collectivization and organization of sovkhozes and machine tractor stations (MTS). The subjects Leningrad included the following: agricultural technology, chemistry, physics, agricultural machinery, military science, dialectical and historical materialism, and history of the Party. In addition, to have a knowledge of the organization and management of agriculture as well as of financial and economic aspects of agricultural enterprises.

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director of the sovkhoz monthly salary was 1,800 rubles. A deputy for political affairs was paid the same. But not all directors receive the same salary. director of another sovkhoz, a smaller one, have received only 1,200 or even 900 rubles a month. Salary rates for directors, as well as bookkeepers, deputies for political affairs, deputies for production, agronomists, zootechnicians, section chiefs and workers in political sections, are based on the amount of land held by a sovkhoz, the number of sections it contains, its tendencies, and its location. The rates were fixed by the People's Commissariat of Sovkhozes and did not change.

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The managers of animal husbandry and crop-raising farms received 300 rubles a month each but lived better than a sovkhos director because all the natural resources were concentrated in their hands and they carried less responsibility for the management and fulfillment of plans than the director of a sovkhos.

Repair mechanics for tractors and agricultural machines, combine drivers, and others on equal footing received 500 rubles a month each, provided the repairs were carried out on time and the combines filled the norms, which was seldom achieved. Tractor drivers received 250 rubles a month if the norm set for farm work was fulfilled 100% and the gasoline allotment not exceeded. If the norm was exceeded by 10% the tractor drivers received a bonus of 20% of their basic salary, etc, on a progressive scale of payment for their work. If the production was short of the norm, say by 10% their basic salary was reduced by 10% and so on. As far as the remaining mass of male and female labor is concerned, they worked on a piece-work basis and never made more than 100-120 rubles a month. The workers who fulfilled the established norm received, moreover, free of charge one liter of skimmed (peregon) milk per day.

When an established plan was over-fulfilled, the wages increased sharply. It was seldom the case, and even when it did happen, it was not without throwing dust into somebody's eyes and at the expense of the quality of land cultivation. The administration itself, working in concert with the political section, always tried to have a number of "shock work front-liners" on hand to parade them as an example to others. [] produced such "shock workers" artificially from among the Party members or the Komsomol. [] have been rated worthless if [] not demonstrated the role of the Party member in production. [] "front-liners" (peredoviki) even []

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Housing conditions were poor. The workers lived in communal flats, with one room to a whole family. Bachelors lived in hostels, four or five men to a room. Even when housing conditions permitted better living, the workers were still kept in hostels; Party discipline required that. All had to live together so that none might be able to think freely about his personal life, and each could be kept under the constant control of secret informers of whom there were many.

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5. [redacted]

The law forbids the workers or employees of a sovkhos to own subsidiary farms, vegetable gardens, plots, cows or other livestock. This law forestalls any interest that a worker might have in a homestead of his own, as is the case in kolkhozes, so that he may devote more time to production in the sovkhos and be dependent on it. Besides, a sovkhos worker is not a member of collective farm but of a consistently "socialistic" farm. The aim of the State is to bring him to the level of an industrial worker so that he would own nothing except his own two hands, i e, to knock out of him the psychology of gain and yearning for property. A laborer must be kept in constant poverty so that he may be used at will by the underlings of the regime.

6. [redacted]

In the sovkhos [redacted] the Party organization was tremendously big. There was a political section [redacted] Its chief was appointed by the agricultural section of the Central Committee VKP(b). He was a member of the Party and a graduate of the All-Union Communist University, where he studied the organization of agricultural planning and production. It was the Institute imeni Stalin in Leningrad. The chief of the political section was at the same time [redacted] for political affairs. The apparatus of the political section includes a deputy chief for Party work, a deputy for Komsomol work, a deputy for female labor, seven instructors for each of the sovkhos sections who at the same time are deputy section chiefs, a secretary for the Party bureau, an editor of the sovkhos newspaper, a club supervisor, a technical secretary, and a chief of cadres; altogether 16 persons who do nothing else except Party and political work and receive from 700 to 1800 rubles a month each.

All Party and political work is performed according to plan and in agreement with the political section of the sovkhos trust and the rayon Party organization. The Party organization exercises strict supervision over the fulfillment of production plans of the sovkhos, the timely payment of State taxes, and the execution of the higher echelon orders instructions from the Party and government organizations. It demands reports from the director, department heads, specialists, agronomists and zootechnicians, to the bureau of the Party committee and to be presented at general meetings. The work between the political sections and the managing personnel is poorly adjusted, because the managing personnel answer with their lives for the slightest mishap or error. While the political sections do not help them but criticize them instead and report their observations of any shortcomings to the higher echelons of the Party organization. On the surface, their relationship is normal, but underneath they cannot stand each other. Rare is the case where the political apparatus cooperates with the managing personnel; on the other hand if there is a breakdown in the economy, not only the managing personnel but the political leaders, as well, are blamed for it. The latter are then charged with dulled political and Party vigilance, fraternization with the sovkhos administration, collusion, lack of supervision, etc. The Party leaders themselves try to create antagonism between the political apparatus and the managing personnel so that the political administration would not trust them but, instead, spy on every man and all his work. Afraid for their own skins and valuing their careers, the Party workers in the sovkhoses, in my opinion, often undermine and impede the fulfillment of production plans.

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